183
789 insure that they and their animals remain brisk and alert. Another age-old ritual is the procession in celebration of the burial of winter which is still in existence today in its ancient form, although most processions now seem to have taken on ecclesiastical appearances. Another ritual performed frequently by the Magyars is the custom of walking around a person or object feared, making thus a magic circle; for example, an accused person tries to walk around the state's witnesses before his trial begins.

● [372] There is an important group of folk customs which center around fire and water. Fire is a chief element in many customs aiming at the warding off of evil forces and purification. In particular, the customs connected with quarterly celebrations feature fire in some form. There are places in Hungary where the fire for the Easter Sunday "burning of Pilate" is lit with flint instead of matches or by even more primitive methods such as rubbing together two sticks of wood. Ceremonial water is in many cases now holy water brought from the church.

771
755 In the peasant's spiritual life, religion and superstitions are inseparable. The following random examples illustrate well this

796 at Easter instead of on May first.

[208] March 15 is the anniversary of the 1848 revolution. It is today being celebrated by the Communists (along with May 1 and April 4 [Liberation by the Red Army]), who have adapted the anti-Hapsburg sentiment of the day for their anti-Western propaganda. No popular custom is connected with March 15.

[526] At Whitsuntide the youth of the village elects, after horseback riding and athletic competitions, the pünkösdi király, the king for a day, and his queen.

June 29, the feast of the apostles Peter and Paul, opens the harvest season.

[372] On Midsummer day (Szentiván, 'St. John's Day') a Saint John's fire is lit in many Hungarian villages, especially in regions which have come under strong Germanic or Slavic influence. The villagers sit around the fire and sing, while the girls jump over the purifying fire, thus assuring themselves a future happy married life.

August 20 was formerly the day of Saint Steven, first King of Hungary. Before World War II, it was occasionally connected with the gathering in of the crop and thanksgiving ceremonies. Today, its celebration in the old form is forbidden; the government pro-